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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 000125

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [IR](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: QATARI FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS IRAN AND MEETS
PRESIDENT

Classified By: Ambassador Chase Untermeyer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani met the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmedi-Nejad, delivering a verbal message from the Qatari Amir, on Tehran January 23. He met with his counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, the following day. Qatari official press reported that HBJ described, in a press conference, Qatari-Iranian relations as "good in the gas and oil sectors, especially in terms of the South Pars Field." (Note. This is the Iranian name for what Qataris call the North Field, the largest single gas field in the world and shared by the two countries.) He said the two countries' gas agreement was a model for building "brotherly" relations.

2. (U) During the visit, the two sides agreed to hold the fifth meeting of the "joint Higher Qatari-Iranian Committee" in Tehran and agreed to create a joint political committee to be headed by office directors of the two foreign ministries. HBJ also met with Dr. Ali Akbar Wilayati, a Counselor in the Iranian MFA.

3. (U) The Arabic-language, Iranian paper al-Wifaq reported January 24 that HBJ said Qatar is striving to lessen the tension on the "peaceful" nuclear issue and recalled the story of the "magic" Moses performed for the Pharaoh in ancient Egypt. Al-Wifaq reported that HBJ called for increasing bilateral economic relations. "The stability and development of Iran is our stability and development, and Iran does not face any danger from the Qatar," he said. HBJ referred to an invitation from Ahmedi-Nejad to visit Tehran and said that the visit will take place in the near future.

4. (C) In his meeting January 21 with A/S Silverberg and Ambassador Untermeyer, HBJ said that "we are very concerned" about Iran. The Iranians are committed to their nuclear weapons program, in his opinion. The Bushehr nuclear plant is close and, weapons activity aside, an accident would impact Qatar more than Iran itself. Also, Iran shares Qatar's natural gas field. He said he told the Iranians that they must work out the nuclear impasse with the EU and the international community. He warned them not to rely on Qatar in the Security Council; we won't be the member "singing alone." But I'm not hopeful, he said.

COMMENT

5. (C) Post views the foreign minister's trip to Tehran as an extension of traditional Qatari regional diplomacy, which seeks to keep lines open to all neighbors. We expect that HBJ encouraged Iranian diplomatic engagement with the West to reduce rising tensions on the nuclear issue.

UNTERMEYER